

## **MINUTES – Board Meeting**

**Thursday, May 9, 2024**

Teams Meeting

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:01 by Board Vice Chair Kathy Lentz. Board members present were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Superintendent Kirsten Baesler. Dustin Hager joined at 9:14am.

Board members Deb Follman, Angela Nagel, and Cory Steiner were absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin and Amy Bigelow from ESPB, Allyson Hicks from Office of Attorney General, Amy Flicek from NDUnited, Robin Huebner from The Forum, and other online guests.

Introductions were held.

**Motion to Include Additional Agenda Items** – Additions to the agenda include administrative cases for Joshua Kading and Allison Caspers. Motion by Evan Kritzberger to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify April Licensure List and Settlement Agreements** – Jenny Bladow made a motion to ratify the April licensure list and settlement agreements. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

## **CASES**

**Olson, Addison** – Ms. Olson's file was reviewed by the board after a Request for Inquiry was received. Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss the case. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Patti wondered why this didn't go to her district's administration before coming to ESPB. She felt it sounded like the situation was more of a conflict between teachers and they don't feel there is enough information to take action. Siri agreed. Attorney Allyson Hicks reminded the board this person has an alleged violation of administrative code. While there may be an alternative remedy the school could have taken, the jurisdiction of the board is to address a possible violation of administrative code. Evan Kritzberger added that he believes Ms. Olson did a thorough job of addressing each alleged violation. Board members who voted in favor of dismissing the case were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Knutson, Eric** – At the previous meeting Amber Fridley recused herself from this case due to a conflict of interest. That recusal continues to this discussion and voting.

Board members asked for options. Allyson said the board needs to look at ESPB's laws and administrative rules. If they believe this is a Code of Conduct violation it could fall under different area ranging from conditions detrimental to learning, psychological wellbeing, relationship with student for professional gain, ect.

Patti Stedman said she doesn't feel there's enough information to completely suspend Mr. Knutson's license without a criminal case. Disciplinary action doesn't mean a license has to be suspended. Disciplinary action could require him to complete the NASDTEC Ethics course. Kathy Lentz clarified that if a letter of reprimand is issued, it would go in the Clearinghouse and Mr. Knutson would have to disclose if he applies for a license somewhere. This is accurate.

Jenny asked if law enforcement is involved or if there has been any additional information on a possible criminal case. Contacts have been made with Minot Police Department and there is no report. Mr. Knutson has not been questioned for anything. Allyson said there is no complaint, no investigator working on it, no information showing that anything was reported to law enforcement. Allyson said if charges were to be filed under NDCC 15.1-13-26 that would require immediate license revocation. If additional information is received that materially changes the facts of the case, this possibly could come back to the board for additional review.

Siri Coleman made a motion to issue Mr. Knutson a letter of reprimand and to require he complete the NASDTEC ethics course at applicant expense for being in violation of Administrative Code 67.1-03-01-02 (6). Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Siri said it is evident there was an electronic relationship. She doesn't feel at this point there is enough evidence to suspend Mr. Knutson's license. Patti agreed and stated it seems there are a lot of lines that are very blurry, and she feels the ethics course would be beneficial. Becky asked if there is a timeframe for him to complete ethics course? Allyson said usually the license is on probation until course is completed, which is typically 30 to 60 days. Siri added a requirement that the course be completed within 30 days to her motion. Patti continued to second. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Tschider, Matlyn** – Ms. Tschider self-disclosed a background offense on her application for licensure. It was also learned that she's delinquent on satisfying the requirements from the court. The board could grant a conditional approval with requirement that she takes care her court requirements. If she doesn't take care of it and continues to have an outstanding warrant, the board can take action against her license.

Patti Stedman made a motion to grant conditional approval, for Ms. Tschider to clear up her criminal case, comply with court requirements and self-disclose any subsequent offenses. Motion seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Kittelson, Miranda** – Ms. Kittelson's license was revoked in 2019 due to a DHS investigation and being placed on the child abuse and neglect registry. She is now eligible to reapply and has applied for an interim substitute license. Any time CPS

issues a finding in a case, the person's name appears on this list which restricts types of interactions they can have with children and vulnerable adults. Pursuant to ESPB laws and rules, a person can reapply after a certain amount of time. It is now up to the board to decide if the substitute license application will be granted or denied. Does the board feel there has been sufficient rehabilitation, that children in a school setting would be in danger? Allyson did ask if anyone had a conflict of interest before case continued. No board members had a conflict of interest.

It's the board's job to look at our laws and rules to determine if there would be a legal basis to deny application for substitute teaching license. Child abuse and neglect index is an administrative list used internally by DHS and is not available to the public. Siri Coleman said she read in the materials submitted by Ms. Kittelson that she attended counseling. Siri wondered if documentation of that could be verified. Allyson said the mental health provider cannot state if the applicant has been rehabilitated, but the counselor could write a letter to the board regarding rehabilitory information. Kathy Lentz made a motion to issue the license. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Kathy feels this was a tragic situation that happened a number of years ago. She doesn't feel Ms. Kittelson would be a danger to students in the classroom, and she's looking to help her district. Evan added that based on what Allyson said, it's not the boards job to look at the DHS action. He said based on the fact that she's been elected to the school board, he doesn't feel there is enough information to prohibit her from holding a license. Patti Stedman asked if the board could ask for a follow-up a year from now. Allyson said the board doesn't micromanage teachers and that's what the complaint process is for. Board members who voted in favor of issuing Ms. Kittelson's license were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, and Kathy Lentz. Patti Stedman voted no. Motion carried.

**McCann, Jesse Bill** – Mr. McCann's file was reviewed after he self-disclosed offenses on his application for an interim substitute license. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the license, with the requirement that Mr. McCann self-report any subsequent offenses. It has been a number of years since charges occurred and he's been upfront about past offenses. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**McCrone, Samuel** – Mr. McCrone's file was reviewed because he is applying for a driver education endorsement and has had a driver's license suspension in the past. Administrative rules state a person's driving record must be free from any conviction that would constitute the basis for suspension or revocation on the instructor's operator's license. His driver's license has since been reinstated. Patti Stedman made motion to grant a driver education endorsement to Mr. McCrone. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Nagurski, Cyril** – Mr. Nagurski's license was reviewed after he self-reported prior offenses on his application for licensure. Evan Kritzberger made motion to grant Mr. Nagurski's license with the requirement to self-report. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Evan said he based his motion on Mr. Nagurski's response and the amount of time since charges occurred. Siri agreed. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Regular meeting recessed at 9:11am.

**Administrative Subcommittee** – Called to order by Administrative Subcommittee Kathy Lentz. Reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Amber Fridley, Dustin Hager, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman.

**Kading, Joshua** – The board voted to request additional information from Mr. Kading in response to Erin Torpey teaching without a license at Oak Grove. A response was received. Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Patti feels based on the information received it seems the message about the importance of teachers holding a license has been addressed. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Dustin Hager, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Caspers, Allison** – The Board voted to request additional information from Ms. Caspers in response to Erin Torpey teaching without a valid license at Oak Grove. Amber Fridley made a motion to dismiss. Seconded by Patti Stedman. A number of conversations with this school have occurred and the message has been received. Patti stated she wasn't pleased with the response from Ms. Caspers. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Dustin Hager, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Administrative Subcommittee was adjourned at 9:18am.

Attorney Allyson Hicks provided an overview of outstanding litigation. She also provided an update on Attorney General's office. Legal intern Mark Openshaw has been hired by AG office. In August, Mark will start training as ESPB's full-time attorney. Allyson will still serve as co-council for about a year, and after that time Mark will take over the education portfolio. Allyson will continue to work with ESPB during legislative session.

**Teacher Support System** – Teacher Support System is updating their name to NDRISE – Retaining, Inspiring, and Supporting Educators. They are finding their name is everywhere but so far the response has been very positive. Erin continues to serve on the ND Retention and Recruitment Task Force and they met for their second in-person meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. They will meet again June 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mentoring enrollment is open for the 2024-2025 school year and is open to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers.

**April Meeting Minutes, License, and Financial Reports** – The April 2024 financial report showed \$77,117.72 in total income received, \$83,092.98 in total expenses, with a net income of minus \$5,975.26. The April 2024 licensure report documented 827 items issued. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, and application fees. Becky provided data on Frontline training. In the past year, 232 people have become licensed as a substitute teacher using the Frontline substitute teacher training. Finance committee will be meeting soon for next year's budget. Evan Kritzberger made motion to approve the April minutes, license, and financial reports. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Disability Waiver** – A disability waiver request has been received from Kelsey Cavanagh for waiver of Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment test, code 5017. Jenny Bladow made motion to approve the request. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Director's Report** – Becky thanked DPI for including ESPB in document upload project that went live in October 2023. We are seeing the benefits, especially with teaching authorizations. Becky thanked Kathy Lentz and Deb Follman for their time on the board. Becky has been corresponding with the Governor's office to make sure we have new board members to fill positions and ensure a quorum. The June retreat and meeting will be held on one day, June 6<sup>th</sup>, with the retreat in the morning and regular meeting in the afternoon. ESPB continues to be involved with apprenticeships, visiting individuals who hold a teaching authorization, and other groups.

### **Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – A sub-group of NDACTE is working on competency-based education. They are leaning toward designing a one-pager to outline what is currently being done and where this can lead to competency-based education programs. They are looking to start with four core courses for teacher education candidates, as well as ways to obtain funding during the next legislative session and finding a director or coordinator of competency-based education.

**Association of Non-Public Schools** – Preparing for legislative session. Siri Coleman is excited that non-public schools now have a platform to get together and share ideas and support.

**Association of School Administrators** – Not present.

**School Boards Association** – Patti Stedman shared that NDSBA Director Alexis Baxley has resigned, and Amy DeKok has been hired as Executive Director.

May 2024

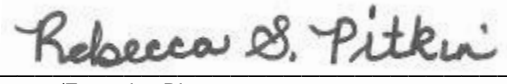
Page 6

**NDUnited** – Not present.

**DPI** – Not present.

Meeting adjourned at 9:49am.

  
Chair

  
Secretary/Executive Director